

231 were able to deal with them effectively; otherwise we would have been hard put to defend ourselves even if we had sticks in our hands.

342 [40] At the back wall of Yo-ha's house are located the family's living quarters, consisting of a rectangular room built entirely of wood. The roof is also made of wood with stones on top to protect it from wind and snow. The stones are arranged in an orderly and pleasing manner on the roof. There is a wooden door in the room, but no window. Upon entering the room, one immediately feels suffocated in the nose and mouth by widespread clouds of smoke from the fire in the hearth. The construction of the hearth, which is located slightly to the left of the center of the room, is very simple. A round pit about three feet in diameter is dug in the ground for building the fire. Three stone slabs are placed in a triangle over this pit to support the large iron pan used for cooking. The [439] pan, round at the bottom, is imported from the Han-Chinese. [372] The fire is lighted by striking a flint with a piece of iron, but actually the fire in the pit is never allowed to go out and it burns day and night. The center of all family activities, the hearth plays an important part in the Lolo household, as is shown later in our discussion of their family life.

576 When we entered the house, we were welcomed by Yo-
353 ha and invited to sit at the back of the hearth by the rear wall. This is the seat of honor for guests. Yo-ha himself took the host's seat on the left side of the hearth. At the back of the host's seat, or sometimes on the left side of the room divided by a wooden partition, were the family sleeping quarters, which also served as the storage place for precious articles and provisions. In front of the hearth stood a wooden cabinet, 352 wooden shelves, water pails, and all the food utensils. Under 445 the shelves were firewood and straw. The right side of the room was divided by a bamboo fence into two sections: a grindstone, a mortar, wooden pails, bamboo baskets, and other articles in the rear half; and two yellow oxen in a [231] wooden pen in the front half. This was the arrangement of Yo-ha's house.

342 Most of the houses in Ta-lin Shan are the same as
351 Yo-ha's, but there are a few exceptions. For example, the house of our headman-protector, Ta-chi, is well known in the Liang Shan area as a Sinicized Lolo house. It has brick walls, a tiled roof, and an arched stone gate with Chinese characters carved on the top and sides. Inside the gate are two sections, the front being a Chinese-style courtyard with animal pens

252 cakes, called corn cake or buckwheat cake. The cakes have to be steamed again in the iron pan before they can be eaten. In addition, an auxiliary dish of sour vegetable soup is served for an ordinary daily meal; sometimes boiled potatoes or bean curd mixed with a green vegetable are added for a comparatively abundant meal.

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● 415 In eating, the food is first served to the black Lolo master seated on the left side or to the rear of the cooking stove. The Lolo serve corn cakes in bamboo baskets and the sour vegetable soup in small round wooden pails. In each pail is placed ma-shih-tzu, a special utensil having the same function as a spoon. The ma-shih-tzu is made of wood with a handle a foot long and an oval-shaped shallow bowl about three inches in diameter. The Lolo hold the cake in both hands while eating, and as they eat, they ladle up soup with a ma-shih-tzu held in the right hand and then drink from it. In a black Lolo family, husband, wife, and children all sit around the stove to eat, but they do not sit or eat together with the white Lolo slaves. This is due to the custom of separation for the two groups, a tradition too strong to be broken. Moreover, the white Lolo can only sit in front or on the right side of the stove when they eat. They are forbidden to sit at the rear side of the stove, which is reserved for honored guests, or on the left where the master sits and rests.

264 Not only are black Lolo and white Lolo separated in eating and drinking, but relatives of different sexes who have to observe the custom of avoidance do not eat together. As 574 mentioned before, the Lolo practice the small family system, but they are very solicitous and attentive in entertaining guests. When relatives come for a visit, they are always entertained with a meal, and even a Lolo stranger is invited to it. 606 Father-in-law and daughter-in-law, because of avoidance, cannot eat at the same table; this is also true of mother-in-law and son-in-law. Younger brother and elder sister-in-law can talk and 607 communicate with each other, but elder brother and younger sister-in-law must also observe avoidance. Li-ch'ü Ku-p'u, who is 28 years old, is younger than Ta-chi, but being the grandson of Ta-chi's grandfather's elder brother, he becomes, according to Lolo tradition, Ta-chi's elder brother. One day when Ku-p'u came to visit Ta-chi at his home, [44] the author observed that Ta-chi, Ku-p'u, and Ta-chi's daughter ate together, while Ta-chi's wife, nee En-cha, and her younger son ate separately from the group.

574 When our inspection team traveled in Liang Shan, we always stayed and had meals with the Lolo. The noble black

574 Lolo families would kill chicken and sheep to entertain us.
 [231] Instead of stabbing the chicken with a knife, they would wring its neck with their hands until it suffocated to death. After
 252 having seared off its feathers over a fire, they would boil it, roast it, or make soup with it. If they killed a sheep, they
 [281] would always flay the skin very dexterously and use it to make a tobacco pouch or bag. The meat is carved into large pieces and cooked together with the bones. Only a little salt is added so that the taste is extremely light. As salt is very scarce in the region, the Lolo consider it as something precious. They
 [263] serve mutton in a broad-mouthed and flat-bottomed wooden
 264 bowl, often painted with pictures. The Lolo sit on the floor
 [415] when eating. Rich black Lolo families would entertain their honored guests around a small round wooden table, about a half foot from the ground and two feet in diameter. At a feast given us by Ta-chi's family, they used this kind of small table on which were placed mutton, rice, and other food. The Lolo did not eat with us. At every meal there were four groups: the members of the inspection team, considered as honored guests, formed a group at the rear side of the stove; the black Lolo master and his family lined up on the left side; the hired laborers of our team, including the Han-Chinese or Lolo carriers, formed another group on the right side; the last group consisted of the black Lolo's household slaves. The last two groups might mingle with one another, but the hosts and guests always formed separate groups and never mixed with the white Lolo or the household slaves. From the Lolo point of view, members of the inspection team were equal to Chinese nobles and had the same status as the black Lolo.

574 According to Lolo custom, the food should not be en-
 [264] joyed alone, but by all who belong to the household, even the slaves. Every time the Lolo killed a sheep to entertain us, it was shared by ten and more persons so that after the meal nothing was left of the animal. At the end of each meal they
 [521] would sit around the stove and talk for a long while before dispersing. They engage in an almost endless conversation when there are guests to be entertained or when neighbors come to call after the master has just returned from a trip. When Ta-chi accompanied us to the village of San-ho-i-ta, visitors came almost continuously for the first day. Ta-chi would entertain them all with wine, using wooden bowls as wine cups.
 273 The Lolo are fond of drinking, which has become a habit. Whether men or women, old or young, they all have a large capacity and can empty several cups at one draught. While distilled liquor is imported from the Han-Chinese region, the

DOWN TO THE FERRY

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settled each of these wives in a separate home within the same ⁰⁰⁰ great compound and sheltered by the same strong walls, and arranged that her son should spend his time a month in each establishment. This plan has answered fairly well, and the three wives have managed to live in moderate peace. The first wife has had no son, but the second wife has three. She has been the favourite and most powerful wife.

At the invitation of Mr Long I went to stay at his place, with the idea of making an attempt to cross over the river. On the way to Mr Long's we stayed the night once ⁴⁶³ or twice in the homes of Nosu landlords, who live south of the Yangtse, and so got an insight into the home life of these people. At every one of these homes we were treated most ⁵⁷⁴ hospitably, a sheep being killed for us on each occasion. ²⁶² A very short time after the sheep was killed we were all sitting around the table devouring it. Years ago I used to wonder at the records in Genesis about guests waiting while animals were killed and prepared for the next meal. I no longer wonder at this most ordinary occurrence. In more ways than one, the Westerner who lives on the hills of West China finds himself in the days of Abraham. Once the hospitable feast began with an extraordinary dish, much prized by these Nosu. The liver, stomach, heart, etc., of the sheep are minced up very finely, and are highly seasoned with pepper, chillies, onions, salt and other condiments. This dish is usually quite raw, and each guest eats with a ^[415] single porcupine quill. It sounds a bit awkward, but in reality one soon gets to use the single quill quite dexterously. I have eaten many better dishes than raw sheep. The Nosu are, however, very partial to this dish, and give it to their guests as a luxury.

CHAPTER X

SUPPER À LA NOSU

WE stayed the night at Chie-tsu Leh-chieh, the ³⁵⁴ village with the loopholed wall around it. The ⁴¹⁵ home where we found a welcome was that of an uncle of one of the Nosu travelling with us. Passing through a courtyard, we were shown into a long room with scarcely any furniture in it. There was a large stone fireplace in the floor at one end, and on the fire was a large iron tripod, about two feet in diameter. On this was resting an enormous iron pan, similar to those the Chinese use nearly all over the country. There was a wood fire in full blaze, and the sight of it to the travellers coming out of the falling snow was very cheering and welcome.

The lady of the house was squatting on the floor on one side of the fire. Her long skirt was spread out around her. Two other women were near by, busy with the fire and the big iron pan on the tripod. There was a long straw mat ³⁵² on the side of the fire facing the lady of the house, and here we sat down, getting as near to the fire as we could, for it was very cold indeed. We sat watching the fire and wondering how long it would take to cook the huge steamer of rice that was resting in the iron pan on the huge tripod.

I noticed that none of the men about the place had any ³⁰² whiskers or moustache, and was told that the Nosu men do not consider it right to grow these. The hairs are all pulled out in early manhood, and never allowed to grow, except in

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the fire to burn itself clean, and the legs were given to the children. I was told the children always had the legs as their perquisite. They burnt these in the fire until the hair was all gone and the meat was warmed through, and then ate them with great relish. Not a trace of salt did they have with the burnt legs. Presently one of the men brought over the lungs, heart, kidneys, etc., and burnt these for a very short time in the ashes of the wood fire. They were then taken out, cut up into pieces, put on a wooden trencher with a high stand and presented to Mr Long and me. This was a mark of respect to us, and there was no way out of it. Mr Long was quite ready to partake of the dish, and I imitated him. The half-cooked, saltless meat was very sweet and had quite a flavour of its own. When one had overcome one's first reluctance there was nothing to find fault with.

It is considered the correct thing to kill the supper animal in the presence of the guest. The guest then knows for a certainty that it is for his particular benefit that the animal has been prepared, and he can also be sure that the goat is not a diseased one and that the meat is not some old remains which a former guest has been unable to eat. If a second party of guests arrives on the same day a second animal is killed and cooked with the same ceremony.

At twenty minutes to eight the meat had been all cut up, and it was all placed in the huge pan of boiling water over the wood fire. All the meat is cooked at once, and if possible eaten at the one meal. Nothing should be left over. The host wants it to be known that he is caring only for his guest and is not thinking at all about his own needs. While the meat was cooking one of the household girls every now and again turned it over with a large wooden spoon. The spoon

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[252]
[415] was more than two feet in length and about ten inches wide
574 in the ladle. It would have made a magnificent jam spoon.

At the prospect of supper before long everybody began to feel more comfortable and to brighten up considerably. The girls and women of the household were quite friendly, and very willing to explain anything they were doing or to show me anything they were using. Conversation became brisk, and every now and again, at some funny remark, rows of beautifully white teeth that set one longing for a similar set smiled in a fascinating way. It was nice to see that the women were frank and open and not afflicted with a false shyness. In China it is most disconcerting to have nearly all the women turn their faces aside if you address them on any subject, and, if they should be young women, perhaps look black, in addition, and refuse to answer you. These Nosu women will smile and look you square in the face as if you were one of their own family. An experience like that reminds one of home, and brings a very comforting feeling to one.

[291] The lady of the house had a large cloak of sheep's fur, worn fur outwards, over her clothes. She was a widow, and conducted herself with great kindness and dignity. What she really thought inside I do not know, but I fancy she felt we were doing her a kindness in coming to visit her. These people do not like to be left alone, and the number and rank of their guests show the rank they hold in the social scale. This horror of being left alone is common to all peoples in China. There is a great longing for company, and "cold loneliness," as it is termed, is the state detested most of all.

Just before the meat was considered sufficiently cooked

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several bunches of dried holly were brought in and thrown on the fire. The blaze and crackling of the holly put an air of delightful brightness over everything. It was like a fanfare of trumpets heralding the approach of the most important guest of all. Everybody was now on the alert. Even a few sleepers, who, in their tiredness, had gone to rest at the other end of the room, woke up and prepared for the event of the evening. 574

The meal was served up on the ground, reminding one of a fresher's "squash" at Cambridge, but while the viands were as easily reached as in the undergraduates' rooms, there were none of the comfortable seats for the guests. First a small solid wooden tray was placed on the ground in front of us, and in this were three wooden dishes. All these were made of camphor wood and rudely painted in several colours. One of the dishes contained rice, piled up in pyramid fashion. The second contained eight pounds of the cooked goat, cut in pieces of from half-a-pound to one pound in size. The third contained gravy. Two wooden spoons about ten inches long were placed by the side of the dishes. The two principal guests, Mr Long and the Englishman, were invited to begin. The other guests and their retainers were eating on the floor near by, while the family waited until everybody else had finished. Salt was very sparingly used, and in the gravy which the members of the family took with their meal no salt was put at all. 576 264 415

Negotiating the pyramid of rice with our two spoons was not a very easy task. Care has to be taken that the rice is not spilled nor allowed to run off the wooden basins. By going slowly and carefully we managed to carry out this part of the programme. The difficult task was with the meat. How 576 264

RAPIDS AHEAD

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342 occasion required. Over the door we noticed the usual
751 charms hung there by the all-present wizard. There were
rams' horns, several hoofs and a lot of small tablets with
Nosu characters written on them. In all there were scores
of these charms of one kind or another, enough, one would
have thought, to have kept all the disturbing influences out
of that home.

574 Entering in, we were delighted to see a huge fire blazing
415 away as if delighted to welcome so many guests. Vri-ha's
father, an old man of seventy-four, gave us warm greetings,
and we were soon at home once more in one of these hospitable
Nosu dwellings. We had only just got seated when the
ceremonial presentation of wine was made to each one of us.
The wine was just the ordinary grain spirit drunk so freely
by these people, but the cups in which the wine was pre-
sented were most remarkable. I examined one of them
closely and found it was composed of the claw and part of the
leg of an eagle. The skin of the leg had been stretched
over a wooden cup and the lower part of the leg and the claw
formed the handle of the cup. The cup could only be put
down when empty, owing to the irregularity of the claws.
These were the most curious winecups I have ever seen, and
when on leaving I was presented with one of them, I felt I
had got a curio indeed. That the cup could only stand up
when upside down was no drawback to the Nosu, who have
no wish to keep a cup with wine in it undrunk for any length
of time. Having taken the cup in their hands, they were not
anxious to put it down until empty. I wonder what the
eagle would say did he know the use his terrible claws were
being put to.

574 Very soon after the presentation of the wine, conversation

The Lolo use extremely simple implements and have hardly any furniture in their rooms. Wooden objects such as beds, chairs, tables and stools are nonexistent in the I region. The only furniture--generally found in the home of the well-to-do Heh-I--consists of one or two wooden cupboards, in which are kept containers for ch'ao-mien, wooden bowls used at meals, and other articles of daily use, as well as things which they regard as family heirloom (such as certificates of award given by the government.) Close to the back wall of the center room there is a huo-k'ang /stove/, which is generally square and sometimes slightly oblong, though there are also round-shaped ones. Three stones forming a triangle and set within the huo-k'ang constitute what is called kuo-chuang, upon which a large iron pot is placed. The Lolo and the Tibetans use the same equipment for their kuo-chuang, but while the latter use an iron tripod to support the pot, the former use three pieces of stone, irregular in size in the ordinary I family but regular and attractively carved with designs and ornaments in the family of the well-to-do Heh-I. Furthermore, the Tibetans use their pot only for boiling tea to drink with tsamba, whereas the Lolo use it to cook all their food, except ch'ao-mien which is edible when mixed with unboiled water. The I never drink tea or boiled water, but only unboiled water whenever thirsty. This practice is most unsanitary. /107/ At any rate, in the I family, the kuo-chuang is regarded as something sacred. Should one ignore this fact and step across the kuo-chuang in a moment of carelessness or perhaps hang wet stockings above it to dry, he would cause serious protest or even violence. Likewise, one must not violate the wooden cupboards placed against the back wall of the room.

The I are more advanced than the Tibetans in that they eat cooked food and have a more complete set of eating utensils. At least in this aspect of their living, they have been influenced by the Chinese. Aside from bowls they also use chopsticks and ma-shih-tzu (little round wooden spoons with long handles, used for mixing soup). They have an especially large iron pot, with a diameter of about three feet, which is used for cooking and placed over the kuo-chuang. It is bought from the Chinese for the I do not know how to smelt iron. They burn firewood in the huo-k'ang. But like the Chinese they know only how to cut down the forest, but not how to preserve and cultivate it. Since the large trees have already been felled in most of the areas, they now have to resort to picking up odd pieces of dried branches to burn as brushwood. Fuel supply has become a serious problem in the sparsely populated Liang-shan.

[177 cont.]

291 the top of the head by means of a wooden comb, and bound in a white headband. Covering the whole is a small turban, whose ends, embroidered and decorated with beads, hang down in back of the head and reach to the shoulders. No portion of the head is shaved.

[302] "Lolo" men and women wear wrapped leggings of linen. However, they very often go about with bare legs and feet.

301 The various feminine jewelry, rings, bracelets, necklaces, are of silver and of a style very close to that of the "Méo" jewelry.

342 The "Lolo" cabins are of two principal models. In the wealthy villages, established near fertile fields, the cabins are built on piles, like those of the "Thai." The animals are confined under-
231 neath the house.

In the poor hamlets, the cabin rests directly upon the ground and is made of a straw roof and of walls of maize stalks. The domestic animals then are kept in a shed near the cabin.

[356] In any case, the dwelling consists of only a single room, generally clean and well cared for. There are no partitions forming interior compartments.

352 The furniture is always of the simplest: a cot bed the length of the long side walls, chests, tables and benches. The crops are
[257] stored almost everywhere.

354 The kitchen always contains two hearths, one of which is specially set apart for the preparation of the food of the unmarried girls, for the reason which will be indicated later.

415 [178] The kitchen utensils, pans in the shape of spherical skull-caps, trays, bowls, cups, and so on, are in no way unique and are similar to the models already described.

262 According to the type of farming, irrigated rice fields or mountainous slopes, the "Lolo" eats either rice, or maize and mountain rice. Besides, he consumes a great quantity of vegetables, peas, beans, cucumbers, eggplants, and so on. Meat is reserved for festival days. Alcohol made from rice or maize is often drunk immoderately.
[273]

[281] From the time they have reached puberty, the young girls must not eat meat and may not use utensils in which greasy foods have been cooked, under pain of falling ill immediately.